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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 002271

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [NL](#) [AF](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS: MFA OFFICIAL ON IRAN/IAEA, AFRICA,
MARITIME SECURITY

Classified By: DCM Chat Blakeman, reasons 1.4 (b, d)

1. (U) This is a action request; please see para 9.

2. (C) Summary: DCM and Polmiloff met August 15 with Director Robert de Groot and Section Head Hans Sandee of the Security and Defense Policy Division at the Dutch MFA. On Iran, de Groot suggested there are no alternatives at present than continued negotiations through the EU3. He noted that the August 9 IAEA Board of Governors meeting revealed for the first time that some EU members are growing hesitant to refer Iran's actions to the UNSC. De Groot suggested convening a Board of Governors meeting immediately following the release of IAEA Director General ElBaradei's anticipated report on September 3. On India, de Groot requested consultations regarding the U.S.-India agreement on nuclear cooperation. He briefly discussed ISAF Stage III and Dutch involvement in Africa. De Groot concluded with a discussion on maritime security, and requested information regarding standard operating procedures for the protection of commercial ships in waterways with high incidents of piracy, including specifically Somalia and the Straits of Malacca. End Summary.

Iran-IAEA

3. (C) De Groot noted a lack of consensus in the IAEA Board of Governors; as such, there did not appear to be any alternatives other than continuing negotiations through the EU3. He added that the Dutch government was considering calling in the Iranian ambassador in The Hague to discuss recent developments regarding the IAEA and the execution of two teenagers in Northeastern Iran in July. De Groot suggested that the Board of Governors meeting on August 9 revealed for the first time hesitancy on the part of some EU members to refer Iran's actions to the UNSC. Among the EU3, he stated that the UK is ready to refer the case to the UNSC, but Germany and France are now hesitant. De Groot speculated that EU members were not entirely certain what Iran had done, and suggested that perhaps the United States had more information on the steps Iran had taken to resume uranium conversion. De Groot added that new Iranian President Ahmadinejad has not been constructive. De Groot pointed to IAEA Director General ElBaradei's report on September 3 as the next step, and suggested that the Board of Governors convene earlier following the release of ElBaradei's report instead of its next planned meeting on September 19. In de Groot's opinion, this was too serious a matter to allow so much time to pass prior to the next Board of Governors meeting.

U.S.-India Nuclear Agreement

4. (C) De Groot raised the recent U.S.-India agreement on nuclear energy cooperation, explaining that the Dutch Embassy in Washington had requested more information and/or an experts, meeting regarding agreement details. De Groot noted that the Dutch have yet to be contacted about this request, and are "quite worried" regarding ramifications the agreement may have for the NPT. He requested any information that Washington might be able to provide -- hopefully in the form of consultations from experts, and closed by remarking "Delhi appears very happy, which makes us quite concerned".

ISAF Stage III -- Partnership with Australia?

5. (C) De Groot briefly reviewed Dutch proposed plans to participate in ISAF Stage III. He expressed satisfaction with the current formulation of ISAF's U.N. mandate (septel), stressing that the mandate is key for Dutch participation in Stage III. He noted that the Netherlands and Australia have begun preliminary discussions regarding a possible partnership in the Dutch proposed PRT in Uruzgan province; hopefully, more progress will be made during the Stage III follow-up conference in The Hague on August 17-18.

Africa

16. (C) When asked about Dutch military operations in Africa, de Groot replied that the Netherlands is committed -- as indicated by the 2003 White Paper on Africa -- but explained that it has proven logistically difficult to send the right personnel to function in such places as Rwanda, Burundi, or DROC. In one instance, for example, a non-French speaking Dutch general officer was sent to the region, which proved problematic. De Groot noted that the Dutch are interested in partnering with greater powers in this region; they cannot act on their own.

17. (C) De Groot pointed to Minister for Development Cooperation Agnes van Ardenne's interest in Sudan as the primary focus of Dutch action in Africa at present. He commented that the U.N. has been slow to develop an operation plan. Following the death of Vice-President John Garang, the need for information from southern Sudan has become vital. De Groot stated that the Dutch plan to send defense experts to southern Sudan in early September as part of an observer mission including German parliamentarians. He cited some security concerns; the unarmed observer mission will not be located near any protective force. However, the mission is important, as it will help the Dutch determine how to best use the approximately 200 million Euros budgeted by the Dutch Parliament for reconstruction in Sudan.

Maritime Security

18. (C) De Groot concluded by raising maritime security. He explained that the Dutch government is under considerable pressure from Dutch shipping companies to enhance security in waterways from Europe to Asia due to increased cases of piracy. Dutch firms are required to pay higher insurance premiums as a result -- this is bad for business. He cited a recent example of a Dutch firm that had been hired to tow an American oil rig from Singapore to Egypt -- the Dutch firm had requested an armed escort or military personnel on board while passing along the coast of Somalia. De Groot wondered whether Coalition forces in Djibouti might be available to assist in some capacity, either through maintaining radio contact or providing escort. De Groot noted that these requests from Dutch shipping firms are coming to the attention of the Dutch parliament; in response, the Dutch government has begun an internal review of what may be possible. He asked whether there were any standard operating procedures to assist commercial vessels through waterways with high rates of piracy, including specifically Somalia and the Straits of Malacca. DCM offered to inquire in Washington and get back to de Groot.

Action Request

19. (C) Post seeks guidance regarding de Groot's requests for a) more information on specific steps Iran has taken to resume uranium conversion; b) experts' consultations on the U.S.-India agreement on nuclear cooperation; and c) information on standard operating procedures or arrangements for the protection of commercial vessels transiting waters with high rates of piracy.

SOBEL